

County Line

News from the Government Offices of Lumpkin County, Georgia

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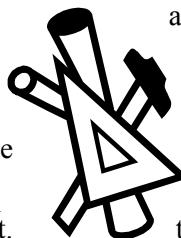
County Employees: At Your Service

County manager Stan Kelley and the Board of Commissioners kicked off the New Year by recognizing the dedication and commitment of 16 county employees at the January commission meeting. The service award program was instituted last summer and will be an annual occurrence going forward. Topping the list for number of years of service to the county as of this year are Brenda Abee, Clerk of Court's office, and Ann Wigley, EMA, who both received ruby pins for 30 years of service to the county. Ruth Bohac, Lumpkin County Clerk, received a service pin and county coin marking 20 years of service, and Rita Harkins of the Clerk of Court's office earned a service pin for 15 years of service. Service pins for 10 years of service were awarded to Diane Grizzle, Ryan Miller, Boyd Ray, Patricia Chastain, David Dearman, Sr., and Henry Grizzle. Finally, Eddy Harris, Mitchell Salain, David Keys, Donna Jarrard, Vickie Bellville and Justin Brown all received service pins for 5 years of service.



GIS Data Available

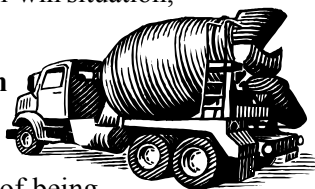
Brand new LIDAR two-foot contours of Lumpkin County's 260 square miles—including 2006 aerial imagery and reference points—are available now to developers and other private users through Lumpkin County's Planning Department. The LIDAR contours and other brand new electronic data sets are the result of a cooperative effort, with the county heading up the project, and with North Georgia College & State University and the city of Dahlonega picking up a portion of the cost, as well. All three entities will use the new maps for planning purposes. Selling the products to the private sector, as well, is a win-win situation,



according to the planning staff, allowing the county to recoup some of its investment through the new revenue source while saving private users a significant amount of time and money compared to what it would cost them to get the images and create the maps themselves. Engineers use the data to calculate things like where to lay underground water and sewer pipes, power lines and other infrastructure. For details on cost and availability of Lumpkin County's new electronic GIS data, and to complete the necessary licensing agreement, go to www.lumpkincounty.gov and click on the blinking announcement on the home page or call (706) 864-6894.

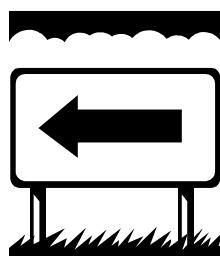
Fire Station No. 4 Off the Ground

After years of being grounded, Lumpkin County's Fire Station No. 4 has finally gotten off the ground on Chesterra Road off GA 400 in south Lumpkin County. Tempered Air is acting as general contractor for the \$700,000 project, slated for completion this year. In addition to saving precious time in responding to structure fires and other emergencies, the presence of the completed fire station will save most homeowners and businesses in that part of the county some dollars on their fire insurance bills. Efforts to "value engineer" the project shaved some costs off the top. Now, even as the county is leaning on the contractor to get the fire station finished on time, county manager Stan Kelley says he and the Board of Commissioners aren't hesitating to slow the process down as necessary to make sure the changes made on paper during the value engineering process don't wind up sacrificing the quality or safety of the construction. "Everybody wants to see this fire station finished," he says, "but we're going to make sure it's done right."



...There Is a Season (Turn, Turn, Turn)

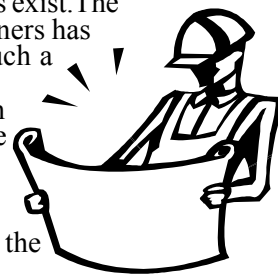
To everything, there is a season, and at the intersection of Hwy. 19 North and Oak Grove Road, that season lasts from August to



May each year. It's called the school year, and it had been creating major headaches for drivers ever since the new Lumpkin County High School opened. While vehicles traveling on Oak Grove Road lined up by the dozens at the T-intersection stop sign to turn left on Hwy. 19 North toward the high school, people needing to turn right toward the middle school and downtown Dahlonega suffered long, frustrating waits just to get to the stop sign. The county's Public Works Department recently added a turn lane on Oak Grove, complete with new striping, and the traffic situation there has eased considerably.

Under Development: Commercial Regs

When it comes to new commercial and industrial development, just about everyone agrees developers should be required to "do it right"—to follow the letter of the law in what, where and how they develop and build. The trouble is, even the best developers and builders have been challenged to do that here in Lumpkin County, since no current commercial/industrial regulations exist. The board of commissioners has seen the need for such a document, one that would interface with its Master Land Use Plan and spell out exactly what is expected of new development before the first shovel of dirt is moved, but they haven't been able to find a way to include it in the county budget. The Lumpkin County Development Authority, charged with attracting good companies that will bring new jobs and increase the tax base, could see the lack of direction made dealing with Lumpkin County a trying experience for companies wanting to build here. The Authority offered to pick up the tab to help get the job done. Once the ball was in his court, Planning Department director Larry Reiter got it rolling right away. A committee has been formed, consultants with the University of Georgia's Fanning Institute of Government have been brought in, and development of a set of regulations is in progress now. There will be opportunities for public input, and the board of commissioners will approve the regulations before they are adopted.



Lumpkin County . . . continued from reverse side

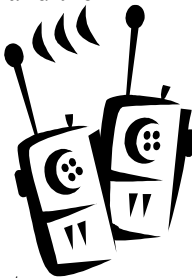
Tennis, Anyone?

With a February groundbreaking ceremony on the campus of North Georgia College & State University, a new \$22 million Library/Technology Center project got underway—and the campus tennis courts that were in the way of progress ceased to exist. Thanks to a creative arrangement between NGCSU and the county, student and community tennis players will be serving balls at a brand new tennis facility, perhaps as soon as this May. The college will lease unused space in the county's Yahoola Creek Park and build eight lighted tennis courts there, according to Steve Gallant, director of planning at NGCSU. Cooperative scheduling will ensure the students have priority during key program and tournament times, while the public has plenty of open access to the courts the rest of the time. Plans also call for NGCSU to build a multi-purpose playing field in the park in the next year, and long term possibilities for the site include such facilities as a field house with showers, a concession stand or other buildings.



"Fired Up" about Grant

Chief Ed Eggert and the Lumpkin County Fire Department are fired up about some new equipment they're getting, thanks to a recent grant award from the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Items on the needs list that will be covered by the grant money include equipment to improve communications between the E-911 communications dispatchers and emergency responders, especially in



more isolated, northern portions of the county; an accountability system to keep track of all responders called out on a particular emergency; and a larger, more powerful "jaws of life" apparatus to cut through the stronger metals of newer vehicles to remove people who become trapped in vehicles. The federal share is \$267,210; the county's portion of the ticket is just under \$30,000. Getting selected to receive the grant was no small feat, according to Chief Eggert and county grants analyst Mark French, as there were more than 1800 applications, totaling close to \$2.5 billion in grant requests on the review table.

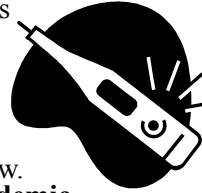


Policy Just Says No to Drugs

In the interests of employee health, workplace safety and accountability to citizens, the Lumpkin County Board of Commissioners recently approved a Random Drug Screen Policy for county employees aimed at preventing on-the-job use of, and influence of, alcohol and controlled and illegal substances. The policy calls for across-the-board pre-employment and post-accident testing, as well as random and periodic drug screening for employees in safety-sensitive jobs and certain other positions of public trust. Safety-sensitive jobs include those that involve operating, repairing or maintaining county vehicles or heavy equipment and those related to emergency response efforts, for example. The policy does allow, in certain limited and defined circumstances and at the discretion of the governing authority, for an employee with a positive drug screen to be granted a second chance to return to duty, pending participation in a prescribed rehabilitation program and meeting other requirements.

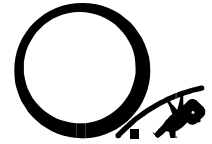
Just in Case . . .

One of the roles of government is to protect citizens. Of course, government can't protect us from all dangers, and citizens must take responsibility for helping themselves and their families, too. But there are steps governments can take to help citizens be prepared for emergencies. Here are some areas Lumpkin County is paying particular attention to right now.



Flu Pandemic.

A flu pandemic is when a new flu strain spreads rapidly around the world. A strong strain of flu could cause widespread severe illness and many deaths. If enough people got sick at once, supplies of food, goods and services, even medical care, could be interrupted. Many health officials think the "bird flu" we hear so much about these days could eventually be transmitted among humans and become the next flu pandemic. Lumpkin County has joined governments at all levels to learn, prepare, and protect citizens as much as possible. A committee representing critical sectors of our community has been working for several months on a plan of action. The committee includes representatives of county and city management, emergency services, public health, private healthcare, business, media, civic and faith-based organizations and others. Draft plans have been submitted from each area, considering preparedness, response and recovery phases of a flu pandemic. After "tabletop" exercises help identify areas needing further work, plans will be finalized and distributed to appropriate community and emergency leaders. An educational campaign will begin soon in our community. Please learn everything you can about



Working for You!

If you have a problem, question or concern involving your county government, answers and assistance are as close as your phone or computer. For contact information for county departments or commissioners, see Dept. and Contact Info., www.lumpkincounty.gov or call (706) 864-3742.

Board of Commissioners

Steve Gooch, Chairman
Dr. John Raber, District 1
Deborah Hutcheson, District 2
Clarence Stowers, District 3
Clarence Grindle, District 4

Stan Kelley
County Manager

Lumpkin County
99 Courthouse Hill
Dahlonega,
Georgia 30533
(706) 864-3742
Fax (706) 864-4760

this topic and do as much as possible to prepare. Good information sources include www.pandemicflu.gov, www.cdc.gov/flu/, and 1 (800) CDC-INFO.

Security. County representatives will attend a community forum held with members of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Series College Program, to be presented at North Georgia College & State University April 17 at 7pm in the Hoag Auditorium. The forum, open to the general public, hopes to bring together leaders from the military, local government, business, journalism and academia to engage in open discussion with preeminent military experts. Informal discussion and debate will center on national security and the impact on the United States Armed Forces. Watch *The Dahlonega Nugget* for details, or contact MAJ Cheryl Strange, cstrange@ngcsu.edu.